

REMARKS

Applicant thanks the Examiner for acknowledging Applicant's claim to foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d), and for confirming that the certified copy of the priority document has been received at the Patent Office from the International Bureau under PCT Rule 17.2(a).

Drawings:

Applicant thanks the Examiner for indicating that the drawings filed with the present application have been approved.

Information Disclosure Statement:

Applicant thanks the Examiner for initialing and returning Form PTO-1449 filed with the present application, thus indicating that all of the references listed thereon have been considered.

Specification:

The Examiner has objected to the specification for a number of reasons. Each will be discussed separately, and addressed, below.

Abstract:

Applicant submits herewith a replacement Abstract, as shown in the previous section, and hereby requests the Examiner withdraw and reconsider the objection to the Abstract.

Specification:

Applicant has also amended the specification in accordance with the Examiner's recommendations and observations. Accordingly, Applicant hereby requests the Examiner reconsider and withdraw the above objection to the specification.

Claim Rejections:

Claims 1-14 are all of the claims currently pending in the present application, and currently, all of the claims stand rejected.

35 U.S.C. § 102(b) Rejection - Claims 1-14:

Claims 1-14 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,659,402 to Fujita et al. In view of the following discussion, Applicant respectfully traverses the above rejection.

In determining the characteristic of a target pixel, Fujita discloses using the square value of the difference between pixels, which results in having the sum of the square values be positive after every determination. Specifically, although Fujita recognizes that “the density variation value may be either a positive or negative value,” Fujita discloses that “the first determination value is always a positive value because it is the square of the density variation value. Therefore, it is not necessary to prepare both positive and negative threshold values, and hence the image processing method and the arrangement thereof can be simplified.” *See* Fujita, col. 2, line 61 to col. 3, line 2. Thus, Fujita is directed to simplifying the determinations. However, this is done at the expense of accuracy.

In view of the foregoing, Applicant submits that the present invention, as claimed, is quite different than that disclosed in Fujita. Specifically, the present invention differs from Fujita where the distribution of the differences is the source of the determination. In Fujita, the sum of the square value of the differences is used, whereas, in the present invention the actual distribution is used. Stated differently, the distribution, of the present invention, is determined

based on the plurality values, including both positive and negative values. Applicant submits that this provides a more accurate and comprehensive result than the “simplified” method of Fujita. Because of this distinction, Applicant submits that Fujita fails to disclose, teach or suggest “a picture element characteristic determining unit for figuring out the distribution of differences of tone levels between object picture elements.” *See* claim 1 (and similarly claims 13 and 14).

In Fujita there is no figuring out the “distribution” of differences of tone levels. Fujita merely employs a “simplified” (and less accurate) method of determining the character of pixels by calculating the square value of the differences, and then comparing the calculated sum with a threshold value. There is no determination of a “distribution” as claimed.

In view of the foregoing, and for at least the reason set forth above, Applicant submits that Fujita fails to disclose, teach or suggest each and every feature of the present invention. Therefore, Fujita fails to anticipate claims 1, 13 and 14 as required under the provisions of 35 U.S.C. § 102(b). Accordingly, Applicant hereby requests the Examiner reconsider and withdraw the above 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) rejection of these claims. Further, as claims 2-12 depend on claim 1, Applicant submits that these claims are also allowable, at least by reason of their dependence.

Conclusion:

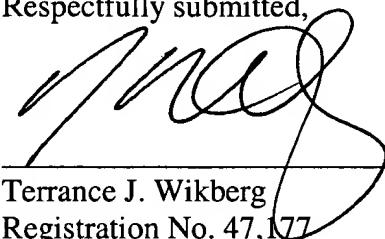
In view of the above, reconsideration and allowance of this application are now believed to be in order, and such actions are hereby solicited. If any points remain in issue which the Examiner feels may be best resolved through a personal or telephone interview, the Examiner is kindly requested to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below.

AMENDMENT UNDER 37 C.F.R. § 1.111
U.S. Application No.: 09/674,620

Our Ref.: Q60962
Art Unit: 2621

The USPTO is directed and authorized to charge all required fees, except for the Issue Fee and the Publication Fee, to Deposit Account No. 19-4880. Please also credit any overpayments to said Deposit Account.

Respectfully submitted,



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